

C O N F E R E N C E P R O C E E D I N G S

The Changing Coastal and Maritime Culture

**The 5th Baltic Sea Region
Cultural Heritage Forum in Tallinn
18 – 20 September 2013**



The Changing Coastal and Maritime Culture. The 5th Baltic Sea Region
Cultural Heritage Forum in Tallinn 18 – 20 September 2013

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Forewords

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Organising the 5th Baltic Sea Region Cultural Heritage Forum in Tallinn in September 2013 was a great challenge for the Estonian National Heritage Board.

Almost 300 people from Estonia, other Baltic States and elsewhere participated at the Forum events. The Forum offered its participants three days of interesting presentations, discussions and also excursions to places of cultural value. An important acknowledgement in the cultural heritage sphere – the local awards ceremony for presenting the Estonian Maritime Museum with the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards Grand Prix 2013 for Conservation and Restoration of the Tallinn Seaplane Harbour – took place in the frame of the Forum.

The 5th Forum addressed the coastal and maritime culture in its various forms. Four thematic groups were discussed:

- Coastal and maritime culture and recreational tourism
- Traditional coastal culture and heritage landscape
- Heritage for a museum or to be preserved *in situ*
- Seaside areas as part of the cities

The Forum served as a platform for discussing the historical and modern directions for the development of the coastal and maritime culture, the problems and possibilities of heritage preservation, as well as the policy and practice of the states in solving those issues. The coastal areas are characterized on the one hand by a strong pressure on the cultural heritage and the living environment and on the other hand by the lack of function and decreasing population in the peripheral regions.

Underwater archaeology is a field where in order to achieve greater success it is necessary for the states to cooperate actively and on an international level with the authorities and museums dealing with underwater cultural heritage. Tourism is an important sphere through which the state resources that have been invested in preserving the cultural heritage, enable to stimulate the economy and place the country on the world’s cultural map in a more prominent manner.

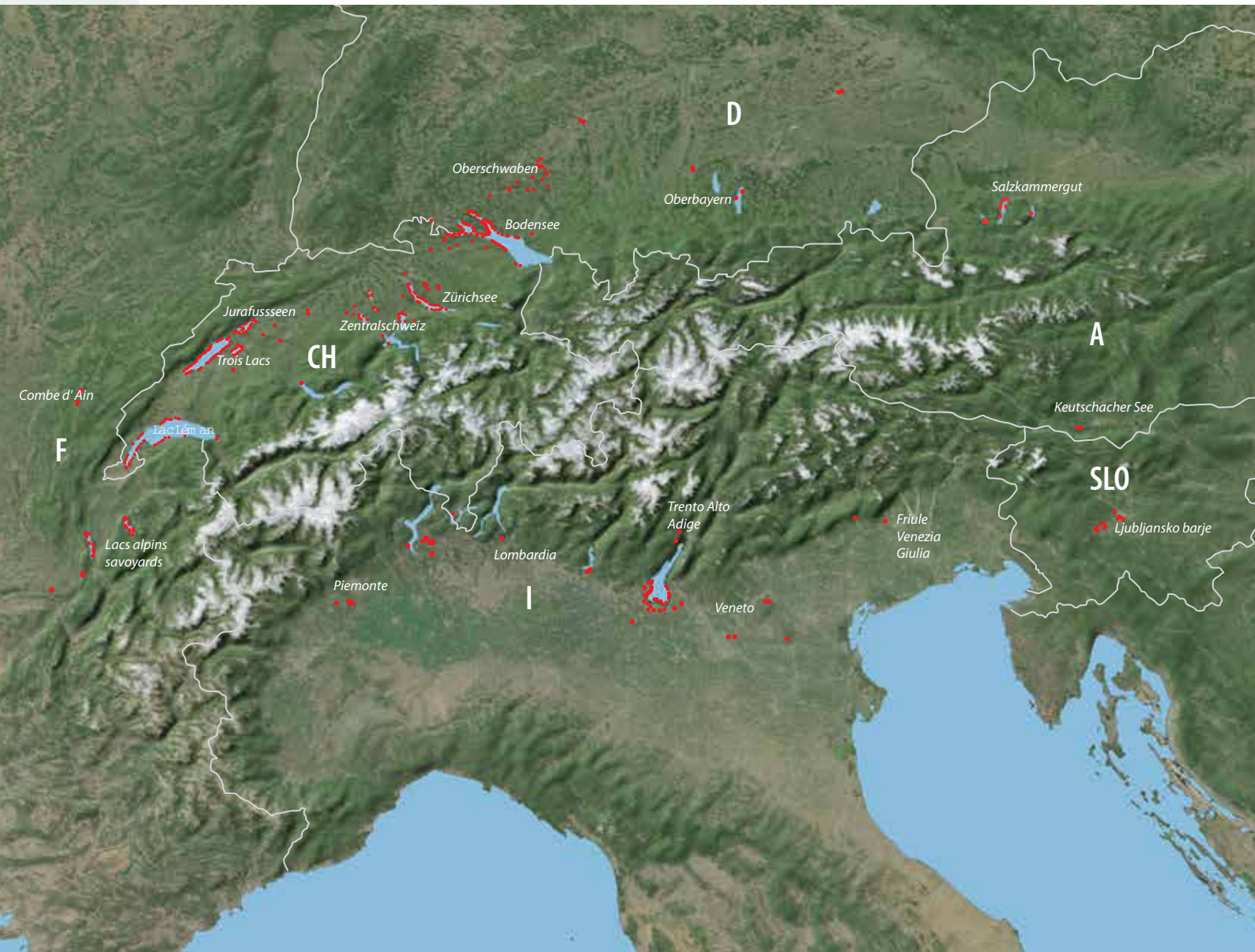
I would like to thank all the authors who have made their contribution to this publication and wish everyone a pleasant reading.



UNESCO World Heritage “Prehistoric Pile-dwellings around the Alps”: Chances and Challenges for Management and Research of Cultural Heritage Under Water

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Research in prehistoric sites of lakes and bogs around the Alps started more than 150 years ago. In 2004, Switzerland took the initiative to propose an international UNESCO world heritage nomination, which was successful in 2011. Six countries – Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland – joined forces to obtain the precious label for an invisible cultural heritage of outstanding universal value. Archaeological sites under water or in bogs are of special importance because objects made of organic material like wood, bark, plant fibres and others survive in this milieu for hundreds or thousands of years. The alpine pile-dwelling sites offer a highly precise dating possibility by using dendrochronology. All in all these sites have a high scientific potential, but run also risks of long term conservation. Beside the scientific possibilities, there are risks to consider: public access is difficult and a major challenge. New ideas are needed to keep the public interest alive.



Peri-alpine lacustrine sites form a part of the European Neolithic, Bronze and Early Iron Age: in northern Italy the first sites date back to the end of the 6th millennium BC, whereas north of the Alps, the oldest sites date from 4300 BC. The peri-alpine phenomena ended by 800 BC. Economically speaking, the settlements span from early farming to developed metal working societies. Out of 1000 sites around the Alps, 111 most characterizing sites were chosen as a serial UNESCO World Heritage in 2011. Some of these sites have not been excavated and possess a high scientific potential and a high grade of integrity. The discoveries of lacustrine sites at the Swiss Lakes of Zurich and Bienne from 1854, brought along the understanding of lacustrine sites as a source of historical knowledge. Up to that time archaeology has been mainly related with grave finds, so the settlement remains that were found were spectacular. Lacustrine sites were the first to represent the everyday life, whereas grave finds represented the world of the dead. Research was influenced by ethnographic reports from Pacific regions where pile-dwelling villages still existed in the 19th century.

UNESCO world heritage process

In 1994, the World Heritage Committee launched its *Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative and Credible World Heritage List*. Its aim was to ensure that the World Heritage List reflects the world's cultural and natural diversity of all sites of outstanding universal value. Ten years later ICOMOS presented the paper *The World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps – an Action Plan for the Future*. In 2004 the most represented categories were architectural properties (341), historic towns (269), religious properties (234) and archaeological properties (171). These four classes constituted then 70% of the cultural properties on the World Heritage List. Among the archaeological properties were less than 30 prehistoric sites: 12 from the Neolithic and Bronze Age, 12 Palaeolithic rock art sites and caves and five areas with Hominid finds.

In Switzerland, the first ideas for starting a world heritage project with prehistoric pile-dwelling settlements emerged in 2000. In 2004, 150 years after the discovery of the first Swiss sites, the project was presented in the assessment to establish the new Swiss *tentative list*. A broadly varied team of experts checked the potential of 35 Swiss proposals. In the end of 2004, the Swiss government nominated five candidates, and among them was the project *Pile Dwellings*. The further steps were taken in 2008–2009: the inscription of the peri-alpine pile-dwelling sites was made on the national tentative lists of France, Germany, Italy, Austria and Slovenia, and in June 2008 the foundation of the association PALAFITTES, which was the leader of the nomination process. The nomination dossier was deposited in January 2010 and the inscription on the World Heritage List was approved in June 2011. Approximately 30 institutions and 200 collaborators in six countries were involved in the nomination process.

Looking back, the project had a rather chaotic beginning. The core group was enthusiastic and determined, but also lacking experience. The project was launched as state organisations often do it: without sufficient external money and support. The unsaid reason behind this was the fear that a larger demand of money will kill the project before it starts – manpower is usually more available in state organisations than project money. Of course this has both positive and negative aspects.

- ◀ Prehistoric lacustrine sites around the Alps. In the framework of the UNESCO world heritage candidature “Prehistoric Pile-dwellings around the Alps” about 1000 settlement sites from the Neolithic and the Bronze Age (5300–800 BC) were listed in an inventory of all sites. 111 were chosen as representative for the serial world heritage. (Map: Swiss Coordination Group UNESCO World Heritage Pile-Dwellings Around The Alps).

One of the first steps was to prepare a multilingual scientific database of all known sites in the six countries, containing all basic information of each site, including coordinates and a map, the dating of the site, a short description and a bibliography. The last inventory in Switzerland had been done in 1930. Since then, no national update had been undertaken though all cantons had some forms of inventories. In the other countries an inventory had never been set up on a national level before. After completion everybody was astonished to learn that more than 1000 sites around the Alps were known. Former estimations had come to about 400.



Pile-dwelling sites are located in lakes and bogs of the Alpine forelands. Underwater archaeology in the Late Neolithic settlement of Sutz-Lattrigen, Rütte (Lake of Biel, Western Switzerland). (Photos: Archaeological Service Canton of Bern).

The following arguments were used in the nomination process:

1. Most of the archaeological remains on the World Heritage List are “solid” visible objects: ruins of stone buildings, rock art, megalithic tombs etc. Non-visible fragile archaeological remains in sediments represent by far the largest part of the archaeological heritage worldwide. A big part of the results to understand human prehistory are coming from extremely vulnerable wetland sites.
2. Non-visible archaeological remains have *per se* a weaker position to be recognized as properties of outstanding universal value. For example: there was no property under water on the World Heritage List until 2011.

Our aim was to introduce an active archaeological heritage management of the future, including a durable protection of endangered sites under water and a sustainable knowledge transfer. We were conscious that special efforts must be given to *in situ* conservation. It was clear that we need strong “tools” to raise public awareness about the value of hidden archaeological sites and land- and seascapes, and there was a consensus that the UNESCO world heritage label will strengthen our efforts for protection of a vulnerable archaeological heritage.

For the nomination process it was important to create a good communication with politicians and decision-makers inside the involved countries. We therefore published a 150-page booklet in five languages in two volumes. The booklet, loaded with eye-catching photos, explanatory graphics and reconstruction drawings was a helpful tool in raising public interest.

The inscription on the World Heritage List was done under the criteria IV and V as given by UNESCO in the so-called Operational Guidelines, the bible for any WH nomination (IV. to be an outstanding example of a type of an architectural ensemble which illustrates significant stages in human history; V. to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change).

Challenges for the future

Independently from a successful nomination, we started to produce the smartphone application *PALAFITTES GUIDE* in the beginning of 2011. The free download on-site audio guide was ready on the moment of inscription in June 2011. In April 2013 one region – between Lake Constance in Germany/Switzerland and Lake Zurich/Switzerland – ordered a study for a better presentation of the new World Heritage. On the occasion of the final presentation, study leader Frank Schellenberg said: «If you want to do something for the touristic marketing of pile-dwelling World Heritage, you have to spend money. The existing structures will not help.» The region has already a number of attractive larger and many small museums on local to regional level. But, the structure is not highly developed and many museums show the same things. To bring the region to a state-of-the-art presentation of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites the study says that on first hand a 20 million € investment and on second hand an annual supplementary budget of 5 million € would be necessary to achieve optimal results. The study recommends giving information on three levels: local small museums, local information points and several main museums. These existing institutions should be updated and improved, whereas two completely new visitor centres should be built.

The successful inscription of archaeological sites like the pile-dwellings around the Alps has many advantages and support is given to institutions that are involved in the preservation of these sites. The label World Heritage is given life-long, if the sites are not spoiled. But, the candidature is only the first step whereas the second step – to manage and especially to transmit the values of a property to the public – is the real challenge.

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Herring and common heritage

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This article is a short version of a presentation given at the 5th Baltic Sea Region Cultural Heritage Forum in September 2013. The presentation carried the title “Herring and Common Heritage”, and one might ask how herring could be a part of our common heritage. The short answer is that herring is at least an important part of our shared heritage. Herring is a good example of how the fisheries history gives us some important shared experience. It is an historical experience that has influenced our understanding of coastal culture and maritime heritage.

For a Norwegian visiting the local fish markets around the Baltic Sea, it is evident that herring still connects us. You can still find Norwegian herring alongside the Baltic herring everywhere at the market, especially in good seasons. It can even be added that great herring catches in Norway are far more visible in Baltic food markets than among domestic consumers. One might say that the herring food culture is more present in everyday life in parts of the Baltic region, all though herring fisheries are by far larger in the North Sea-region. I will later provide some examples on how the fisheries, trade and food culture were more intervened in earlier historical periods.

Before we look into the history of herring in the Baltic and the North Sea, I would like to express some arguments about why fisheries history is a fascinating part of our shared maritime heritage. Fisheries history is an important part of our maritime history, and a great resource to increase our understanding of our common and diverse maritime heritage.



Fishing huts like the ones that were once common in the Finnish archipelago. They were used during the fishing season. (Photo: T.H. Järvi. National Board of Antiquities).